

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 162880

FOLLOWING REPEAT JAKARTA 08529 ACTION SECSTATE DATED JUNE 26, 1978.

QUOTE: C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 8529

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MOPS, PORG, ID
SUBJECT: EAST TIMOR QUESTION

REF: (A) LISBON 4404, (B) CANBERRA 4786, (C) MAPUTO 0784,
(D) USUN 02628, (E) STATE 156112, (F) BISSAU 0704

1. IT APPEARS FROM REFTELS THAT FRETELIN AND ITS SUPPORTERS ARE BEGINNING A CAMPAIGN TO INFLUENCE AS MUCH OF WORLD OPINION AS POSSIBLE IN FRETELIN FAVOR AND TO PREPARE FOR THE FORTHCOMING UNGA. SINCE INFORMATION ABOUT EAST TIMOR IS NOT WIDELY AVAILABLE, EMBASSY WOULD LIKE TO SUGGEST THAT DEPARTMENT SEND A CIRCULAR TELEGRAM TO ALL DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR POSTS ALERTING THEM TO THIS APPARENT CAMPAIGN AND PROVIDING THEM WITH AN ACCURATE PICTURE OF THE SITUATION AS SEEN BY THE DEPARTMENT AND THIS EMBASSY. WE WOULD OFFER THE FOLLOWING AS SOME OF THE POINTS WHICH MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN SUCH A MESSAGE AND WHICH COULD BE USED IN DISCUSSIONS BY POSTS WITH INTERESTED PARTIES.

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2. TO THE BEST OF OUR KNOWLEDGE THE PRESENT SITUATION IN EAST TIMOR IS AS FOLLOWS:

A. THE GOI BELIVES THAT THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 600 TO 1000 HARD-CORE MEMBERS OF FRETELIN IN EAST TIMOR AND SEVERAL THOUSAND MORE TIMORESE EITHER WILLINGLY OR

UNWILLINGLY PRESENTLY IN FRETILIN CONTROLLED AREAS. THESE FIGURES ARE ACCEPTED BY AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND OTHER NATIONS IN THE REGION WHICH FOLLOW EVENTS IN EAST TIMOR CLOSELY.

B. THE GOI EXPECTS CONTINUED SMALL-SCALE HARASSMENT FOR SOME TIME TO COME BUT FEARS NO REPEAT NO REAL THREAT FROM FRETILIN WHOSE STRENGTH AND POPULAR SUPPORT ARE DECREASING.

C. VISITORS TO EAST TIMOR OVER LAST FEW MONTHS INCLUDE NEW ZEALAND AMBASSADOR TO INDONESIA, APOSTOLIC PRO-NUNCIO, EMBOFF AND DEFENSE ATTACHE. THEY ALL, FROM PERSONAL OBSERVATION, CONFIRMED GOI CLAIMS TO CONTROL MAIN AREAS OF EAST TIMOR, FACT THAT GOI IS ACTIVELY WORKING FOR THE BETTERMENT OF THE POPULATION AND IS MAKING A REAL EFFORT TO INTEGRATE AND HELP THE POPULATION, AS WELL AS THE FACT THAT LOCAL EAST TIMORESE HOLD MOST OF CIVILIAN POSITIONS.

3. THERE ARE SEVERAL RELIABLE INDICATIONS THAT THE GOI PLANS TO OPEN EAST TIMOR TO MORE REGULAR VISITS BY OUTSIDERS WITHIN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS. REGULAR AIR SERVICE BY GARUDA FROM JAKARTA TO DILI WILL BEGIN AFTER PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S VISIT TO THE PROVINCE IN JULY, AND BAUCAU AIRPORT WILL REPORTEDLY BE OPENED FOR INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS. THE FRETILIN CLAIM THAT THE GOI AGREED TO AND CONFIDENTIAL

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THEN RENEGED ON PERMITTING THE ICRC TO VISIT EAST TIMOR IS TOTALLY INCORRECT. THE GOI HAS NEVER AGREED TO SUCH VISITS BUT, IN LINE WITH THE COMMENTS ABOVE, WE BELIEVE THE AREA WILL BE OPENED TO SOME OUTSIDE VISITORS WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL MONTHS.

4. FROM REFERENCED TELEGRAMS WE NOTE CLAIMS BY FRETILIN REPRESENTATIVES AND FRIENDS ABROAD THAT A) FRETILIN IS DEFEATING GOI FORCES IN EAST TIMOR AND CONTROLS MOST OF AREA, B) THAT FRETILIN SUGGESTS IT IS WILLING TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GOI AND C) THAT IT'S WORKING ON TRYING TO GET CERTAIN COUNTRIES, SUCH AS THE U.S., TO BECOME DIRECTLY INVOLVED EITHER AS A MEDIATOR OR AT LEAST IN SUPPORT OF ALLEGEDLY MODERATE TIMOR RESOLUTION AT UNGA. FINALLY, FRETILIN HAS EVEN CLAIMED THAT AMERICAN MILITARY ADVISERS ARE PRESENT ON GOI SIDE IN EAST TIMOR, A FACT THAT HAS BEEN CATEGORICALLY DENIED HERE AND ELSEWHERE. THERE ARE NO REPEAT NO U.S. ADVISERS OF ANY KIND IN EAST TIMOR. SIMILARLY FRETILIN CLAIMS THAT INSURGENCY HAS SPREAD TO WEST TIMOR ARE TOTALLY WITHOUT FOUNDATION.

5. THESE FRETILIN EFFORTS APPEAR TO U S CALCULATED TO

CAUSE CONFUSION AND TO STRENGTHEN FRETILIN HAND IN EFFORT
TO KEEP ISSUE ALIVE IN UN. ACTUALLY WE BELIEVE THESE
MOVES AND THESE TOTALLY ERRONEOUS ALLEGATIONS RESULT FROM
AN AWARENESS BY FRETILIN THAT ITS POSITION IN EAST TIMOR IS ERODING.

6. AS FAR AS GOI POSITION IS CONCERNED, THE GOI CONSIDERS
EAST TIMOR TO BE AN INTERNAL MATTER. THE AREA WAS
OFFICIALLY ACCEPTED AND INCORPORATED INTO INDONESIA IN
AUGUST 1976 AND PRESENT MILITARY ACTIVITY THERE IS VIEWED
AS MERELY POLICE ACTION. INDONESIA WOULD TAKE UMBRAGE
AT ANY NATION, ESPECIALLY ONE WHICH LIKE THE U.S. HAS
RECOGNIZED THE ABSORPTION OF EAST TIMOR, IF ANY CREDIT-
ABILITY WERE GIVEN TO FRETILIN CLAIMS OR SUPPORT FOR
EFFORTS TO REOPEN THE ISSUE.
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7. AS CONCERNS USG POSITION, AS WELL AS THAT OF AUSTRALIA,
ASEAN STATES AND OTHERS, WE HAVE ACCEPTED THE ABSORPTION
OF EAST TIMOR INTO INDONESIA AS A FACT ACCOMPLISHED AND HAVE
DECLARED OUR BELIEF THAT THE BEST ROUTE NOW IS TO BEND
THE EFFORTS OF THE UN AND INDIVIDUAL NATIONS TOWARDS
HELPING THE TIMORESE IN THEIR DEVELOPMENT. IN VIEW OF
OUR DEFACTO ACCEPTANCE OF THE SITUATION, THE USG DOES
NOT CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE TO SUPPORT THE PROPOSED UNGA
RESOLUTION OR OTHER SUCH MOVES OR IN ANY WAY TO ENCOURAGE
FRETILIN.
MASTERS UNQUOTE VANCE

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